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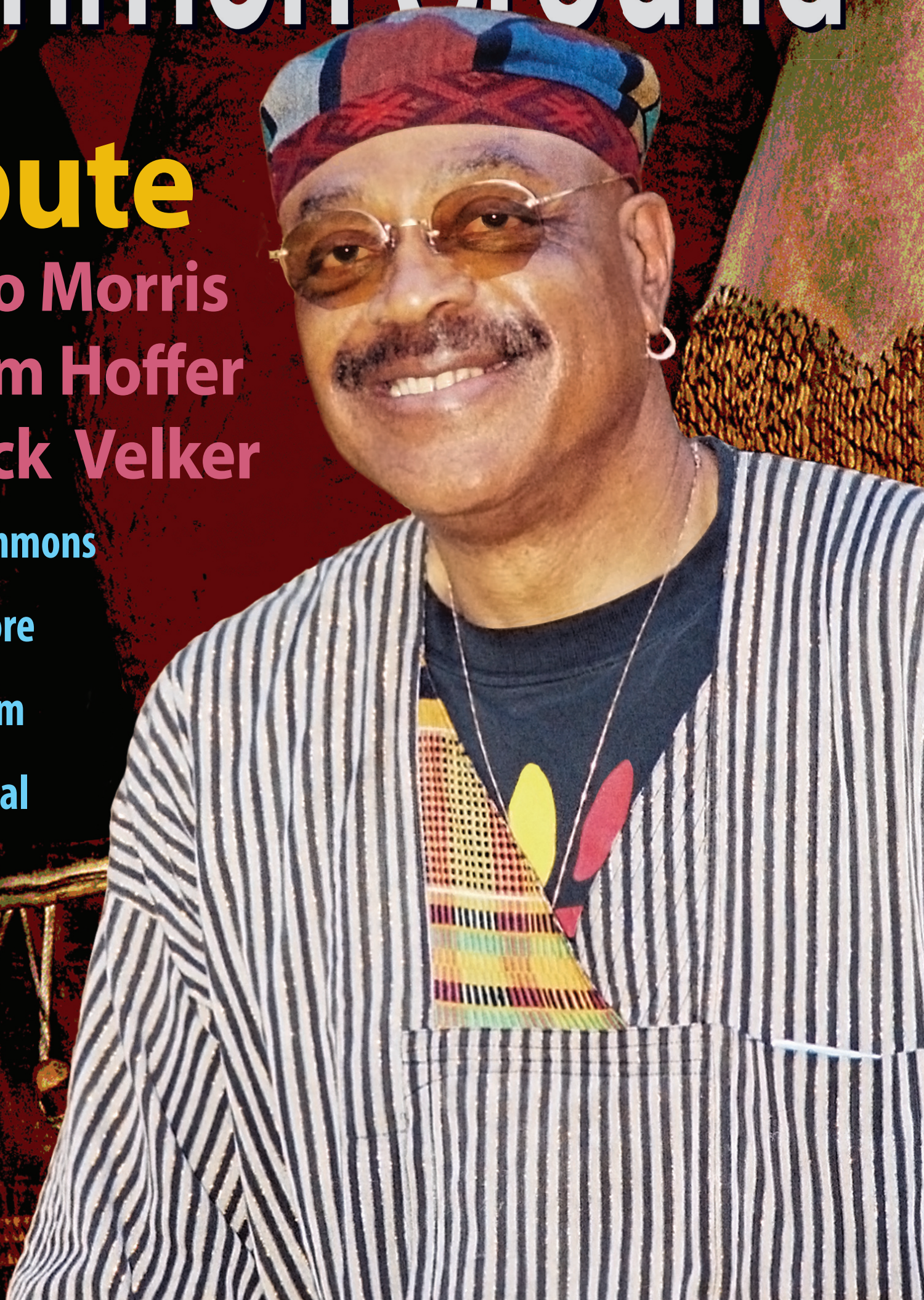
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Who gave you authority to question authority?

WRITING ON THE WALL Joseph Roberts

SO WE started CG in 1982 and grew it from 20,000 readers to a quarter million today. But lately what I read, think and feel, urges me to do more because the planet is in a hell of a mess and conventional media is part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Mass Media (MM) for the most part presents a narrative that reinforces the current market religion. It does not inspire people to think for themselves, MM regurgitates image and story lines from the globally controlled G20 empire (Gang of 20). Their reach is massive and they develop and invade countries that disobey. Political leaders and other thought leaders generally comply.

Unfortunately the modern empire's coercion no longer just extracts resources from weaker domains, but it also has nasty side effects of destroying cultures, economies, and peoples. It has become a life-blind greed-driven juggernaut threatening the very environment that future generations need to survive. MM's thirst for compliance bedevils a basic law of ecology: – that we need diversity to survive. If we think the same, we go down the same drain.

You name it, land, water or air, massive corporations make a profit from screwing it up. From climate change,

atomic arsenals, desertification, and pollution to manufactured obsolescence, WMD and frankenfoods, their acts are all justified by the media they own. They tell us they got it right, and that we should just keep doing what we are doing because we got the best damned democracy money can buy (give or take a few bailouts). Well, go ahead if you want to have human life destroyed on Earth. But count me out because there is a better game to play and that is called saving Planet Earth (not just Private Ryan).

It is time to take action and counterbalance the global BS media with fresh new media dedicated to questioning authority. Send me your ideas and pledge support to grow the media we need to survive as a healthy species and flourish.

Twenty-seven years ago we started Common Ground magazine and organized Vancouver's first Walk for Peace. Now there is a new challenge and opportunity. I invite you to join me on an amazing adventure to grow media 2.0 to question authority.

Joseph Roberts

Publisher

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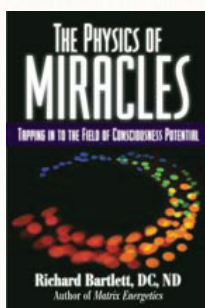
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A salute to Abram Hoffer

Alternative medicine's brave pioneer

HEALTH



Born in Hoffer, Saskatchewan, November 11, 1917
Died in Victoria, BC, May 27, 2009

Abram Hoffer was the co-discoverer of the first effective lipid-lowering agent, the B vitamin niacin. He was also the creator of "respect-based" treatments for acute schizophrenia, involving adequate doses of respect, shelter, appropriate nutrition, medication and mega doses of specific vitamins. He was well known for his pioneering work with vitamin C and niacin-based treatments for treating schizophrenia. Photo by Kyle Cameron, taken during an interview with Connie Littlefield for her documentary *Feed Your Head* (late 2009 release).

ON MY DESK sits a book called *Cholesterol Control Without Diet: The Niacin Solution* by Will Parsons. Inside is the following inscription, handwritten in pen:

Dear Abram:

None of this could have happened but for you bringing the niacin idea to the Mayo Clinic where it found the way to me. It was meant to be. My best to you and Rose always. Stay well and enjoy each day!

Bill Parsons 8-1-98

Abram Hoffer lent me this book and I regret I am too late to give it back to him in person. He passed away in May, a man whose huge set of accomplishments was never fully appreciated during his lifetime. However, over time, he will likely eventually be recognized as a giant among giants.

His death prompts a reflection about the type of healthcare we've created for ourselves in the 21st century, where despite the craziness, the dominance of the pharmaceutical industry and the often degrading levels to which healthcare can sink, there are men like Abram Hoffer who work all their lives toward a better, kinder, more humane treatment of illness.

A few years ago, I arranged to meet

Dr. Hoffer at his office – the *Orthomolecular Vitamin Information Centre – on the third floor of a small complex on Quadra Street in Victoria. In his late eighties at the time, he had a sharp mind and eyes that sparkled with intellectual curiosity. He invited me in and offered me a seat as he hunkered down at his desk across from me. He said he liked my book *Selling Sickness* and I immediately warmed to him.

He wasn't practising medicine anymore, but he kept an office to do nutritional consulting for patients. I admitted to him that I was on a sleuthing mission. I wanted to find out why orthomolecular medicine, or the use of high dose vitamins in the treatments of disease, was having such a hard time being accepted by mainstream medicine. (I wrote about this in "Monopoly Medicine Squashes the Alternatives," August 2006, *Common Ground*. See Archives at www.commonground.ca.) I came there to ask a simple question: Why has vitamin therapy – the use of mega-doses of vitamins as the cure for a variety of diseases – never really taken off?

If anyone knew the answer to this question, it was Abram Hoffer. He was a pioneer in this field, his work extending as far back as the 1950s when he was testing the uses of high doses of vita-

min B-3 (as high as three to 12 or more grams daily) in treating schizophrenia. He also experimented with the use of vitamin C, vitamin B-6, zinc, vitamin B complex and selenium. Along with medications, he used these vitamins to treat a range of illnesses.

The one thing about Hoffer that definitely labelled him "Old School" is that he spoke of curing people and curing diseases. Today, that language seems almost quaint when contrasted with current medical industry rhetoric that studiously avoids the notion of "cure." The best we can hope for from pharma-dominated medical care is palliation of symptoms. Nobody speaks of cures anymore – cures are not profitable; cures are passé.

Fifty years after he started his research, Hoffer was still talking about cures. He coined the term "pandeficiency disease," which he said was disease that could be cured by addressing a multiple deficiency of vitamins. In a paper he sent me after my visit, he said that to understand mental illness one needed to understand "pandeficiency disease" and for him it was essential to study nutrient deficiencies in treating all kinds of illness, not just mental illness.

The modern way of treating psychiatric illnesses troubled him deeply, "The diagnostic scheme [in psychiatry]

DRUG BUST *Alan Cassels*

is so awful I have discarded it entirely," he wrote to me. He added, "Patients today would do well to avoid psychiatry like the plague and instead if they agree to experiment upon themselves, which is what their psychiatrist will do, to try each drug one after another until they find one that has no side effects and does help them. Unfortunately they won't find many."

In our visit, Hoffer told me how using large doses of vitamins to treat people with mental illness was not only safe, but often successful. He said that of the thousands of schizophrenic patients he had treated, 85 percent were "normal" after two years of treatment. By "normal" he meant that his patients were returning to productive lives within society, able to do productive work and have relationships and so on. You certainly can't say that of the current batch of popular anti-psychotics – drugs like Zyprexa, Risperidal or Seroquel – being prescribed like candy today. In fact, those drugs likely do the opposite; they ensure you will never return to your relationships or work.

Hoffer's work is full of case histories dating back to the beginning of the 1960s. They are described in more than 30 books and 600 publications in both the establishment and alternative press. Much of his work is published in the *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine*, which he started. Unfortunately, this journal is not indexed on Med Line, the world's premier medical indexing agency, and proponents of orthomolecular medicine, like Hoffer, call this a form of official censorship orchestrated by the anti-orthomolecular establishment. I say it's just another example of how hard it is for rebels to penetrate the medical orthodoxy.

Orthomolecular medicine is a field that has essentially been sidelined and marginalized by orthodox medicine, despite the work of profile researchers like Linus Pauling, winner of two Nobel Prizes. Just ask anyone who treats cancer patients or schizophrenics whether they would consider using high-dose vitamin therapy and they will likely look at you as if you're some kind of quack. Hoffer admits that most physicians believe nutrition plays a large part in the healing arts, but nutrition

is largely not taught in medical school (except if you study naturopathy where maybe 30 percent of your education goes to studying nutrition). Modern medicine will say – without a hint of deviousness – that there's no evidence for those therapies. End of story.

To counter this, Hoffer could point to double-blind placebo studies that are five decades old, using vitamin B-3, also known as niacin (three grams per day) which he was testing – and found effective – in treating schizophrenia in 1952.

Unfortunately, Hoffer began this research at a time when the new forms of powerful psychiatric drugs were just being developed by pharmaceutical firms and enthusiastically embraced by psychiatrists as the “modern” way to treat severe mental disturbances. In my telephone interview with Andrew Saul, assistant editor of the *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine*, he confirmed that Hoffer was considered an early threat by the pharmaceutical establishment and that as he started to publish his research, the psychiatric profession basically closed ranks behind him.

“They wanted to make sure that this upstart wouldn't produce any conflicting treatments,” Saul told me, adding that although Hoffer's early research was published, “he was warned from psychiatry that he would never publish again.” Hoffer then began his own journal.

If Hoffer had been taken seriously, we would not currently see drugs like Lipitor, the biggest selling drug in the history of the world. (Pfizer sold \$14 billion worth of this cholesterol-lowering drug last year.) Fifty years ago, Hoffer produced scientific evidence that niacin lowered cholesterol levels (and, incidentally, does so without the cost or safety issues associated with statins – drugs like Lipitor). Abram Hoffer managed to convince Dr. William Parsons, the senior resident at the

Mayo Clinic, to study and confirm his findings, which he did. I'm holding Parson's book in my hands as proof.

As Hoffer wrote, “In spite of the fact that there have been no negative studies and thousands of positive reports, even today niacin is not used, as it has no advertising to promote it. Drugs today are made popular, not by the quality of their activity and freedom from side effects, but by the size of the advertising budget (think Vioxx).”

Somewhat of a visionary, Hoffer conceded that it would take time for



Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and author of The ABCs of Disease Mongering

his theories to penetrate modern medicine. “I have for many years predicted that it would take about 40 years before megavitamin therapy would become widely accepted. I had started the clock at 1957 when we first published our paper describing the use of large doses of vitamin B3 for the treatment of acute schizophrenia. I assumed that by the year 1997, this would become the recognized best treatment,” he wrote.

Sadly, it isn't and it probably isn't even on the radar of most psychiatrists who treat severe mental illness.

I don't know if Hoffer's research will stand the test of time, but I do know the pharma-dominated world we live in tends to detest rebels like Hoffer. Near the end of his days, I saw that Abram Hoffer was sad and perhaps

a bit resigned to the current range of treatments for the mentally ill at this dawn of a new millennia. Irrational, inhumane and exuberant prescribing of toxic drugs is *de rigueur*, led by a psychiatry profession embarrassingly monopolized by the pharmaceutical industry. He shook his head at the ignorance of a medical profession that nonchalantly over-drugged energetic children with stimulants, mildly unhappy people with antidepressants, and the elderly and mentally ill with ineffective and toxic antipsychotic drugs.

Once we are through this period of craziness, I think there will be a reassessment of the work of people like Abram Hoffer. At the very least, he will be recognized as one key voice of reason – someone who recommended compassion and respect for the mentally ill, offering effective, supportive environments with modest doses of effective drugs and high doses of various vitamin therapies. It may take another half-century before medicine fully appreciates the work of Hoffer and starts to embrace and test his vitamin theories, but I hope not.

Maybe his death will at least galvanize some serious medical attention to his theories and help steer current medical practice towards the kinds of honourable, first-do-no-harm-type medicine that characterizes the best that medicine can offer.

**Frances Fuller, an orthomolecular consultant who received her training from Dr. Hoffer and worked with him for many years, is now running the Orthomolecular Vitamin Information Centre and seeing clients. Suite 3A-2727 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC, 250-386-8756, ffuller@islandnet.com www.orthomolecularvitamincentre.com/. For more information about orthomolecular medicine, visit www.orthomed.org*

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Iron: precious health metal

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

TEACHERS IN our schools are supplied with a multitude of resources from the closely aligned meat and dairy industries. These materials are designed to establish in children's minds the idea that we must eat meat to obtain iron and that cow's milk is essential for bone building in humans. Neither of these industry-derived fabrications is true, but if you are still haunted by these rusty facts, read the solid update concerning iron that follows. (See next month's column for an update on calcium.)

Iron is a "precious metal" when it comes to human health. As part of our blood cells, it plays a central role in transporting oxygen throughout the body, releasing this life-giving substance where needed and carrying away the metabolic waste product carbon dioxide. As part of many enzyme systems, iron also plays key roles in the production of cellular energy, immune system functioning and in the mental processes surrounding learning and behaviour.

Every day, we lose miniscule amounts of iron in cells that are sloughed from skin and intestinal walls. We recycle our body's iron supply and those losses must be replaced. Women of childbearing age lose additional iron during menstruation. The building of new cells can deplete the small reserves of infants and children. With teens, there can be the double challenge of growth and notoriously poor eating habits (though vegetarian teens tend to eat better than non-vegetarian teens). The most prevalent nutritional deficiency in North America is that of iron and the most susceptible groups are women of childbearing age, teens and young children.

Naturally, those who experience blood loss for any reason – people with ulcers or blood donors – have increased needs and athletes have high requirements due to increased oxygen demands.

Symptoms of iron deficiency include exhaustion, sensitivity to cold, irritabil-

ity and pale skin. (These symptoms may have other causes as well.) If you have doubts about your iron status, have your hemoglobin, serum iron and transferrin (iron transport protein) checked.

Iron deficiency anemia is no more common among vegetarians than non-vegetarians. While iron from plant foods is not absorbed as well as the iron from meat, vegetarian diets tend to be higher in iron and far higher in the vitamin C that helps us absorb iron from plant foods. Vegans consume even more iron and tend to replace milk, which contains no iron and also inhibits iron absorption, with iron-rich foods such as soymilk. Oranges or orange juice help us absorb iron from the tofu or soymilk in a smoothie. Sweet red pepper helps us absorb iron from chickpeas, beans, lentils or soy foods in the same meal. Kiwifruit, papaya and salad help us absorb iron from nuts, whole grains or beans when eaten at approximately the same time.

Food preparation techniques can also increase our iron absorption. These include soaking beans prior to cooking; the sprouting of grains, seeds and legumes; the leavening of whole grain breads; and the fermenting of tempeh or miso. Surprisingly, cast-iron or stainless steel cookware can contribute to our iron supply when we cook acidic foods such as spaghetti sauce or sweet and sour sauce. On the other hand, our absorption of iron is reduced when we drink black or green teas or cow's milk with iron-containing meals. To get more iron, drink water or fruit juices that contain vitamin C with your meals.

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian and author. For more on iron, see nutrition classics Becoming Vegetarian, Becoming Vegan, Raising Vegetarian Children and the Food Allergy Survival Guide. To book a personal consultation with Vesanto in Langley, call 604-882-6782. www.nutrispeak.com

Strike it rich with iron from plant foods

Here are some tips to maximize the iron in your diet:

1. Eat iron-rich plant foods (especially beans, peas and lentils).
2. Use iron-fortified foods (enriched cereals, grain products and meat analogues) and whole grains.
3. Help your body absorb iron by eating foods rich in vitamin C at the same time.
4. Use foods that are leavened, sprouted, soaked (as with beans) and fermented.
5. If your iron status is low, avoid consuming dairy products and black or green teas at the same time as iron sources.
6. Use cast-iron or stainless steel cookware.
7. If in doubt, have your iron status checked.



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Trust your gut & follow your heart

Human organs may have their reasons that reason knows nothing of...

by Geoff Olson

"That's where the truth lies, right down here in the gut. Do you know you have more nerve endings in your gut than you have in your head? You can look it up. I know some of you are going to say, 'I did look it up and that's not true.' That's 'cause you looked it up in a book. Next time, look it up in your gut. I did. My gut tells me that's how our nervous system works."

— Stephen Colbert, explaining how he and George W. Bush think alike, at the 2006 White House Press Dinner. (See end of article for link to Colbert's roast.)

IN HIS BLACK-TIE routine about the human gut, Stephen Colbert cloaked a medical truth in the guise of comedy. The midsection really does house a secondary brain, scientists say, a discovery consistent with our personal perceptions of "butterflies" in the stomach and "gut feelings."

Although the gut has only 100 million neurons, compared to an estimated 100 billion in the brain, that's enough for some sophisticated programming and processing. It's called the "enteric nervous system," and it plays a major role in our feelings of well-being. This complex network of neurons sheathes the stomach, esophagus and small intestine. The same neurochemicals, neuropeptides and hormones that are found in the brain are found in the enteric nervous system, acting as a command and control centre for your entrails.

When an approaching job interview causes an attack of cramps, that's the gut-brain at work. Through the tenuous connection of the vagus nerve, the brain sends signals to the gut, and vice versa. Under life-threatening or dangerous conditions, the brain will shut down the gut-brain entirely (there is no need to defecate or eat on the battlefield). Hence, the difficulty swallowing under fearful conditions.

In a 1996 article in the *New York Times*, Dr. Michael Gershon, professor of anatomy and cell biology at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, told of how the gut-brain and cranial brain act in concert, and sometimes create negative feedback loops. "Just as the brain can upset the gut, the gut can also upset the brain," he said. "If you were chained to the toilet with cramps, you'd be upset, too." Even the folk wisdom that indigestion causes nightmares may have some truth to it; patients with bowel problems show disrupted patterns of REM sleep.

Dr. Gershon gave an anecdotal example of the gut-brain's surprising independence. A male nurse, an old sergeant, was doing rounds in a hospital treating paraplegic war veterans. With their lower spinal cords destroyed,

the patients would get impacted. "The sergeant was anal compulsive," Dr. Gershon told the *New York Times*. "At 10:00 AM every morning, the patients got enemas. Then the sergeant was rotated off the ward. His replacement decided to give enemas only after compactions occurred. But at 10 the next morning, everyone on the ward had a bowel movement at the same time, without enemas." It appeared that the nurse had trained the men's colons to evacuate at the appointed time.

Scientists don't reject the notion that the enteric system may be capable of rudimentary learning and memory, like its more highly evolved counterpart upstairs. But the possibility that any other organ, other than the brain, might possibly demonstrate a similar capacity? In academe, this notion is more likely to produce tightened sphincters than research papers.

The gut may have a "mind" of its own, but the heart? In April of 2008, the *Daily Mail* reported that 69-year-old Sonny Graham had committed suicide in Vidalia, Georgia, in exactly the same way as the man who had given him a new heart. In 1995, Graham was given less than six months to live when he received a call from the Medical University of South Carolina, telling him that a heart had just become available from 33-year-old Terry Cottle, who had taken his own life by shooting himself in the throat with a shotgun. After the operation, Graham contacted the organ donation agency, wanting to thank the man's family for saving his life. He met with the donor's wife, Cheryl, and the two fell in love. The wife of the donor became the wife of the recipient.

Thirteen years later, Cheryl Cottle was grieving all over again, after Graham committed suicide from a gun-

shot to the neck, repeating her first husband's fate. Graham's story was part of an odd series of articles in the *Daily Mail* about heart transplant patients who claimed to have taken on the personality traits of their donors. In one tale, a middle-aged man developed a newfound love for classical music after a heart transplant. "It transpired that the 17-year-old donor had loved classical music and played the violin. He had died in a drive-by shooting, clutching a violin to his chest."

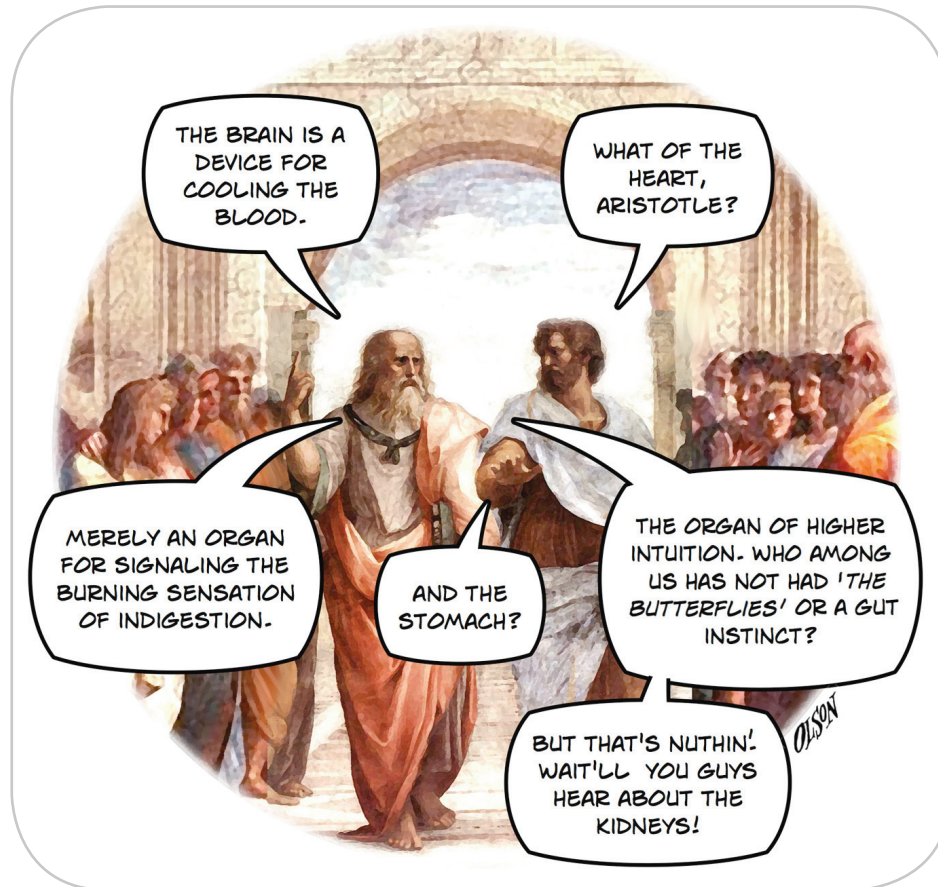
Dr. Gary Schwartz claims he and his co-workers at the University of Arizona have documented dozens of cases of a similar kind. "It's a targeted personality change," he told the *Daily Mail*. "If this is the result of drugs, or stress, or coincidence, none of those would predict the specific patterns of information that would match the donor."

The *Daily Mail* article on Sonny Graham's suicide floated the idea of "cellular memory." Nonsense, responded skeptics, who argued there is no hard-core scientific evidence for any such occult mechanism. They also claimed that Schwartz had not done properly controlled scientific studies to back his claims of personalities accompanying heart transplants, and was relying exclusively on anecdotal tales. Considering that thousands of heart transplants are performed daily across the world, and that there are significant mind/body responses to postoperative drugs, to say nothing of the trauma of the surgery itself, is it not reasonable to expect occasional coincidental connections between donors and recipients, behaviourally speaking?

In one case, Schwartz says a young patient had been very health conscious after her heart surgery, and one of the first things she did after leaving the hospital was to visit a fast food outlet, something she had previously avoided. She also became "aggressive and impetuous." On his "Neurologica" blog, Steven Novella notes that all of the patient's postoperative traits — aggression, impetuousness and hunger — were hardly a mystery. "Those happen to all be typical side effects of prednisone, an immunosuppressant drug that many transplant recipients require," he explains.

The *Daily Mail* also excerpted passages from *A Change of Heart*, the 2007 memoir of Claire Sylvia. At the age of 47, Sylvia was dying from a disease called primary pulmonary hypertension. In 1988, she had a heart-lung transplant, then a radically new procedure in the US.

Sylvia was the first person in her state to have such an operation, she writes, and there was a lot of public-



ity. Two reporters came to the hospital to interview her, and one asked what she wanted to do more than anything else, after this miracle. “I’m dying for a beer right now,” she replied. She was mortified that she had given such a flippant answer, and also surprised. “I didn’t even like beer. But the craving I felt was specifically for the taste of beer.”

Sylvia found she’d developed a sudden fondness for certain foods she hadn’t liked before: Snickers bars, green peppers, Kentucky Fried Chicken takeaway. The changes in her behaviour gave her an alarming thought: what if her male donor’s heart started to affect her sexual preferences? Over time, she found she was still attracted to men, but she didn’t have the same desire to have a boyfriend. “I was freer and more independent than before – as if I had taken on a more masculine outlook,” she writes in her memoir.

Sylvia noted that even her walk became more manly. Her daughter asked her why she was lumbering around like a football player. “This new masculine energy wasn’t

how and why the heart affects mental clarity, creativity and emotional balance,” writes Mohamed Omar Salem, assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioural Science at the United Arab Emirates University. He cites a 2002 paper in which scientists claim to have discovered a neural pathway and mechanism whereby the heart’s neural input could inhibit or facilitate the brain’s electrical activity. The heart appears to have its own “peculiar logic” that often departs from the direction of the autonomic nervous system, Salem observes.

The heart’s afferent nerves enter the brain at its base, and cascade up to the higher cognitive centres in the cortex, where they are able to influence perception, decision-making and other cognitive processing. The heart’s nerves also connect with the limbic system, the emotional centre of the brain.

In fact, the heart’s independent nervous system is the very thing that allows it to survive surgical transplants. “Normally, the heart communicates with the brain via nerve fibres running through the vagus nerve and the

changed at all postoperatively. As noted in the paper, “In this group, patients showed massive defence and denial reactions, mainly by rapidly changing the subject or making the question ridiculous.”

“Fifteen percent stated that their personality had indeed changed, but not because of the donor organ, but due to the life-threatening event.”

Only six percent – three patients – reported a distinct change of personality due to their new hearts. “These incorporation fantasies forced them to change feelings and reactions and accept those of the donor. Verbatim statements of these heart transplant recipients show that there seem to be severe problems regarding graft incorporation, which are based on the age-old idea of the heart as a centre that houses feelings and forms the personality,” the paper reported.

In other words, the doctors interpreted the three patients’ reports from a psychiatric perspective, taking them to be a confused mix of folklore and anxiety. The patients had been duped by the “age-old idea of the heart as a centre that houses feelings and forms the personality,” resulting in their “incorporation fantasies.” The Austrian doctors had dragged the ghost of Freud into their scientific reasoning to disavow the ancient idea of the heart as a source of feeling and to position the three patients’ postoperative perceptions as delusional ideation.

Yet is it so incredible to hypothesize that memory might inhere in the heart’s workings? That might be a bit of stretch for anyone who still clings to the idea of the heart as a glorified pump. But the elastic tension of science is really tested with the notion that some human character traits might not be entirely brain-based, and that they may even be passed along with transplanted tissue.

After a series of bizarre dreams about her young donor, heart-lung transplant recipient Claire Sylvia managed to track down his family. During a visit with the parents, she says she confirmed that all of her newfound character traits – her taste for particular foods and beverages and sense of independence – were identical to those of her teenage donor.

During her visit, Sylvia sat with the donor’s parents, who gave her a framed photo of their son to look at. “In this photo, he looked about 14. He was dressed in formal clothes, standing beside a priest. But even with the glasses, I could see the sparkle in his eyes.

“June (the mother) started to say something about Tim when she suddenly choked up. Now the tears flowed. I felt a bond between us like nothing I had ever known. But I couldn’t quite comprehend this: me holding Tim’s picture in my hands and his heart in my chest.

“I paused to take a breath and Tim’s lungs filled with air. Except that they were my lungs now,” Sylvia writes.

If the gut-brains of disabled veterans can demonstrate memory and learning, can the “little brains” of healthy people’s hearts also demonstrate similar capabilities? And if desires and feelings are inscribed in the cryptic language of neuropeptides and synapses, could these desires and feelings be reexpressed in another body, via a transplanted organ?

You can’t say the scientific jury is still out on this claimed phenomenon – the jurors have yet to be called. Claire Sylvia’s strange story may be entirely the result of chance, a confirmation bias or a *folie à deux* between her and the donor family. But there is probably enough in her story, and those of other heart transplant patients, to make a case worth pursuing in the court of science.

(Link to Colbert’s roast: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-869183917758574879>)

www.geoffolson.com

The heart is responsible for the body’s most powerful electromagnetic field. It can be detected by instruments several feet away from the body. The heart glows – not just metaphorically, but in a measurable, scientific sense.

limited to my walk,” she explained. “I felt a new power that I associated with strength and vibrancy.”

Her postoperative condition reminded of being pregnant, when she experienced something she described as “foreign and beyond my control, yet terribly precious and vulnerable [as if] a second soul were sharing my body.”

All she knew of the donor was that he was an 18-year-old boy who had been killed in a motorcycle accident. Against the hospital’s advice, she decided to track down the donor family. She discovered that the young donor’s likes and dislikes were exactly in line with her personality changes.

There is no greater expression of western culture’s schizoid nature than how we think of the heart. To most scientists and doctors, the heart is nothing more than a glorified pump. William Harvey’s 17th century discovery that the heart pumps blood through the body’s circulatory system is one of the touchstone moments of medical history.

Yet in many cultures throughout history, the heart has been considered the source of emotions, passion and wisdom. For example, the Chinese term “hsin” means the totality of our psychic functioning, and more specifically, the centre of that functioning, which is associated with the central point of the upper body, in the chest.

In Western tradition, the heart is repeatedly referred to as a thinking, feeling organ in its own right, summed up in philosopher Blaise Pascal’s line that the “heart has its reasons that reason knows nothing of.” The “heartache” of a lost loved one, or from unrequited love, is a universal human experience. For most of us, the heart’s joys and pains aren’t just vacuous greeting card sentiments, but an experiential reality.

In fact, the heart is a rather more remarkable organ than we give it credit for. There isn’t just neural traffic from the brain to the heart, but the other direction as well. J. A. Armour of the Centre de Recherche at the Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur de Montréal, has written on what he calls the heart’s “little brain,” a “nervous system intrinsic to it.”

“These studies provided the scientific basis to explain

spinal column. In a heart transplant, these nerve connections do not reconnect for an extended period of time; in the meantime, the transplanted heart is able to function in its new host only through the capacity of its intact, intrinsic nervous system,” writes Salem.

The heart also releases noradrenaline and dopamine neurotransmitters, once thought exclusively limited to the central nervous system. It is also a hormonal gland, producing a hormone called atrial natriuretic factor. ANF affects the blood vessels, the kidneys, the adrenal glands and a large number of regulatory regions in the brain.

Scientists have also discovered that the heart secretes oxytocin, the “love” or bonding hormone. According to Salem, “In addition to its functions in childbirth and lactation, recent evidence indicates that this hormone is also involved in cognition, tolerance, adaptation, complex sexual and maternal behaviour, learning social cues and the establishment of enduring pair bonds. Concentrations of oxytocin in the heart were found to be as high as those found in the brain.”

And last, but not least, the heart is responsible for the body’s most powerful electromagnetic field. It can be detected by instruments several feet away from the body. The heart glows – not just metaphorically, but in a measurable, scientific sense.

We’re obviously talking about a far more sophisticated device than a mere pump. It’s a complex, self-regulating system with its own neural network that communicates with, and influences, the brain through chemical signals and neural pathways, just as the enteric nervous system does.

Mainstream scientific opinion draws the line at spooky, postoperative personality transfers, however. In 1992, a group of Austrian doctors published a retrospective inquiry on 47 heart transplant patients in a paper entitled “Does changing the heart mean changing personality?” The patients, all of whom had undergone transplants over a two-year period in Vienna, were asked for an interview, to determine if they felt they experienced a change in personality since their operations.

The respondents fell into three distinct groups. Seventy-nine percent stated that their personality had not



Music in the heart

THIRTY SOMETHING Catherine Chapman Dinim

CULTURE

IN THE FOG of sleep deprivation and baby brain, saying the wrong word and almost falling asleep at all sorts of inopportune times – but being sleepless when the time is right – I sit down to write a column that Ishi usually writes. While parenting an eight-month-old, teething baby has its frustrations, it is the most joyful task I have ever undertaken.

level ratchets up a notch when it's your own little one exploring and experiencing for the first time.

Stella is so into music. She has a little wooden drum and a castanet and she loves our singing bowls. When we put music on the stereo, she moves so naturally and easily. Her enjoyment is in every pore, every cell. When I was pregnant

each and two little black spoons, they crashed and banged, singing and calling out to each other, joy apparent on their faces. They are still too young to be consciously creating together, but to see them play off each other, curious about the other little being making the same sound, was so beautiful to watch.

When do we lose this un-selfconscious enjoyment of music or art or moving and being in our bodies? Some adults still have it, holding on to a sense of what we call "childlike." So many people say that they aren't good singers or that they can't draw. I know where this comes from, but spending time with children is a great antidote. Kids don't care if your voice is flat or your stick people are crooked. If you are enjoying yourself creating with them, they will give you back all the joy they find in themselves.

I just today watched a bunch of videos of the kids in the PS22 Chorus in New York City singing their hearts out. They groove with their songs, doing hand gestures and making faces, singing with pure, unbridled joy. Five million people have tuned in on the Internet to see them

sing. We are crying out for this kind of feeling! I hope we can all make it happen in our own lives every day.

Resources:

<http://robertfulghum.com/>
<http://www.peace.ca/kindergarten.htm>
<http://ps22chorus.blogspot.com/>

Quotes:

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.
– Pablo Picasso

Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn.
– Charlie Parker

Thank goodness I was never sent to school; it would have rubbed off some of the originality.
– Beatrix Potter

Catherine is an educator, wife and friend living in Vancouver, BC. She tries to live slowly so she can enjoy the important things. catherinerchapman@gmail.com

.....
Kids don't care if your voice is flat or your stick people are crooked. If you are enjoying yourself creating with them, they will give you back all the joy they find in themselves.
.....

Years ago, there was a poem going around about having learned everything you really need to know in kindergarten. It talked about being present in the moment and cutting out all the unimportant stuff that we adults think are important. As an educator, I've had the amazing chance to witness kids learning in both school and home environments, but the excitement

with her, I remember being amazed at her sense of rhythm; whether listening to Glenn Gould playing Bach or dancing to German techno til 4:00 AM, she moved in her dark, watery world with ease. She still has that.

Last week, Stella and little Tenzin had the chance to play music together. With a set of bongos between them, a shaker



Creative Commons freedom

INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

WHEN I STARTED this column, I wanted to find a way to both make it free and easy for a number of groups to share it, including bloggers, small non-commercial publications and individuals, whilst also giving syndicating publications something they could stake a claim in. Luckily, I was aware of a new copyright licensing system called Creative Commons that enables just such a hybrid model of media production. Not only is it a useful tool for media producers, but it's also an important part of the larger trend that is blurring the lines between media producers and consumers of media.

Started in 2002, the Creative Commons (CC) licensing system allows artists – professional and amateur – to copyright their work with as many restrictions as they choose, including the capacity to completely “un-copy-right” their works. According to its

website, “Creative Commons provides free tools that allows authors, scientists, artists and educators to easily mark their creative work with the freedoms they want it to carry.”

Creative Commons allows cultural producers to easily add an individually defined copyright badge to their work (usually a small graphic). These badges provide a clear indication of the specific copyright restrictions (or lack thereof) for other cultural producers and users. Big corporate media organizations use synergies and joint ventures to bring in larger audiences. Independent and online media need to create their own synergies by building and sharing audiences, drawing upon their own unique strengths. I figured what better chance to experiment than with a column focusing on the intersection between media, culture and technology.

The Creative Commons licence I use asks each organization that publishes

the *Media Links* column (<http://democraticmedia.ca/blog/steve-anderson>) to post a statement at the end of each article acknowledging and linking to all the other syndicating publications. Creative Commons and the open Inter-

category of media content producers/users called “producers.” According to Axel Burns, who coined the term “producers,” the “traditional value chain of producer-distributor-consumer has condensed to a singular point, the pro-

.....
In an unprecedented move in 2007, Yahoo! announced plans to allow users to employ Creative Commons licensing in its huge menu of online spaces and tools.
.....

net enable this and other new forms of collaboration and synergy.

Are we all “producers?”

Some consider Creative Commons to be not only representative of the break from passive mediums like TV to the more interactive medium of the Internet, but also a key element of a new

duser, interacting with and potentially enhancing existing content.” Thus, we now have producers with “fluid roles” and perpetually unfinished media.

While media production has always been a collective process involving production ingredients from our collective cultural heritage, Creative Commons further enables *continued pg. 31...*



Turner's musical notes

by Bob Turner

MUSIC IS not only an international language; it may be the most powerful form of language because of inherent intense emotional possibilities, which can be manipulated by master composers in every culture.

Manipulation may be a charged and loaded term, but that is what artistic composers do. Listen to Handel's *Messiah*, wherein Handel portrays the glory of God, or Górecki's *Symphony No. 3*, wherein lost children of the holocaust are mourned in a symphony of sorrow. These masters truly believed

classical masters in their time.

It didn't take long for record companies to realize there was a whole new world out there – a world with a mass market larger than ever before envisioned. The humanitarian drive of the masters was replaced by the "bottom line," which was driven not by the artistic composers, but by producers who can be described as the link between the artist and the marketplace. They were dedicated to selling a combination of replication and identity for profit.

Production music becomes an identity of consumption with a shelf life

.....
The fact that, from a classical point of view, none of these poets could sing made absolutely no difference. They had an ability to tap their truth and serve it up on a plate – a truth that people could grasp while being touched emotionally and deeply with a story relevant to their beliefs.

in their work. They intended not only to encapsulate their evolving personal aesthetic, but they were also motivated to gift the experience to others, and they have been very successful at it.

The combination of raw honesty with conscience, and skill with a cultural truth of their moment in time, created not only historic works, but also galvanized those events which defined that moment in time. History has accepted their vision and continued to applaud it throughout the centuries, ensuring proof of the greatness of their art.

Looking at the 21st century, the process continues with many significant twists and turns, involving emerging fields of duplication and real-time planetary communications. Since the mid-20th century, an incline plane of marketing has ramped up to the current saturation point. Pop music exploded with meaning in the 1960s. A new breed of composer known as the "singer-songwriter" emerged with Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen, outstanding examples of that form. The fact that, from a classical point of view, none of these poets could sing made absolutely no difference. They had an ability to tap into their truth and serve it up on a plate – a truth that people could grasp while being touched emotionally and deeply with a story relevant to the beliefs and cultural understandings of that era, as did the

of only a few years. No one believes in much and not much is going to be remembered. Neil Young's mantra of "following the music" is replaced with "following the money." Or, in the words of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, "You don't really care for music, do you?"

Simultaneously, as the markets of music are falling apart and the mould is breaking (as musical data is digitally shared on the Internet and the barrier to putting music out there is lifting), a strong and hopefully good thing will virally work its way around the world. We have the possibility of a paradigm shift. A shift from capital intensive media to a caring and compassionate world-culture where artists tell their real stories, stories which will touch the truth and enhance the lives of others, as the great masters have always done. The masters never made it in the marketplace, but they were always supported by a humanitarian ideal, institution, or patron of the times.

Let's hope the epoch of egocentric materialism has peaked and the human race can arrive at a new common ground. What survives will not be a "trend" or an "identity." Each of us is involved in the future of the planet. The quality of choice that each individual makes will determine which way we will be going. Good luck and good night.

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 Dick Gaughan • Great Lake Swimmers • HAPA • Corey Harris • Veda Hille • Iron and Wine • James Keelaghan
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A man who was every bit as remarkable in simple conversation as he was behind the keyboard.

by Jhan Dudley

IN THE summer of 2007, Jack and I talked about doing some acoustic blues performances, hewn from the classic styles of players like Jellyroll Morton, Lonnie Johnson and Big Bill Broonzy. In August of that year, we recorded a few tracks, just to try out some ideas and see how we might go about it. We were really just trying to get an idea of what this sort of thing might sound like when done within the framework of our own individual playing styles. We recorded 10 or 12 tunes that night, including a number of takes of a couple of songs. None of it was ever intended for release so we just set up one microphone at the piano and recorded both the vocals and piano into it. Likewise the guitar.

Thus, the sonic quality of the tunes on this CD is not what you'd call professionally recorded. Ultimately though, I think this rawness actually tends to enhance the recordings. What would otherwise be a distraction seems to contribute a kind of authenticity to the sound, putting it in the same rough-and-tumble vein as many of the early recordings from the '20s and '30s.

Regardless of all that, Jack's music is soulful and alive and undeniably real. Moreover, it truly exhibits the touching humanity of the man himself, a man who was every bit as remarkable in simple conversation as he was behind the keyboard.

Anyone familiar with his amazingly prolific output, both as a composer and a performer, would know that Jack's music stretched out to embrace an incredible variety of styles. And yet there was always a common thread running through all of his work. To my mind, that thread is exemplified in this CD, with a purity and simplicity that is truly revealing. As for me, of all the music that he ever recorded, this is what I shall cherish the most, as it is, indeed, in sound and spirit quintessential Jack Velker.

Jhan Dudley is the co-owner of Siegel Entertainment Ltd. (www.siegelent.com)

The quintessential Jack Velker

1945-2009

by Odette Jobidon and Patricia and Norbert Peters

JACK VELKER was an outstanding performer, brilliant composer, studio musician and arranger. He was versatile and charismatic with great joie-de-vivre and humility. Guided by a chivalrous code of honour and compassion, Jack extended the same level of respect and kindness to everyone.

The man

His outstanding performances and genuine love for his audience touched people everywhere. Recently, a gentleman in the audience at the Pan Pacific hotel came to the piano, shook Jack's hand and exclaimed, "My, you are a serious mother of a pianist!" Jack thanked him and, upon introducing himself, discovered he was shaking hands with Quincy Jones.

Blessed with an amazing memory, Jack, an avid reader of history and philosophy, loved to share and channel his knowledge. While not a religious man, he was highly spiritual, with a kind and forgiving nature. Like many artists, Jack would have been deemed financially poor by North American standards. Nevertheless, he was and always will remain one of the richest men who ever lived for he was a fulfilled, creative, passionate and loving being. Living every moment to its fullest, Jack made our world a much better place and inspired us to higher ideals.

The entertainer

As one of the most versatile performers on the Vancouver scene, Jack maintained a rigorous performance schedule, playing 250 to 300 engagements a year. One night, you'd find him playing the Grand at the Pan Pacific or at the Gotham and the next night, he'd be at the Yale, wailing on the Hammond b-3 or playing the accordion with Mojo Zydeco. You might also have seen him playing for patients at a hospital or at a retirement home.

For the past 20 years, alongside co-host sax player Ross Barrett, Jack took great

pleasure performing at the Sunday Soul Service with their highly spirited, eclectic five to 12-piece band. This weekly offering, which first saw the light at Santos on Commercial Drive, continues every Sunday at the Cottage Bistro. Throughout his career, Jack performed with hundreds of acts, including the 49th Parallel, which toured quasi-non-stop for a year and a half in a converted Brewster glass-topped

played at birthdays, wakes, bikers' parties, way-out theatrical presentations, on the street and on boats, at office parties, in dope dens and gambling houses. In 1977, he spent the year in England, Spain and Morocco. In 1979, back in Vancouver, he opened for Ray Charles at the Cave and for Paul Revere and the Raiders as well as performing regularly at the Classical Joint and joining the local band Waves.

In the early '80s, Jack and I (Odette Jobidon) as artistic director, developed a concept for the creation of a large, professional, multicultural orchestra to perform some of Jack's exotic scores. In an attempt to keep a fair balance due to our intimate life/work relationship, we invited Ross Barrett to join in as co-composer. The Ethno-Fusion Orchestra Project, involving an international cast of 20 professional musicians, kept us busy for years.

From 1985 to 1993, in collaboration with prominent artistic designer Michael Malcolm and with the help of dedicated teams of volunteers, we created 20 lavish galas called Painters & Players Productions, which featured up to 150 performers, including opera singers, acrobats, ballet dancers, painters

in action and human sculptures. BCTV acclaimed these shows "the best entertainment value in the city." Jack continued to perform and tour with a great variety of bands, including an incarnation of the Platters, two cross-Canada tours with tributes to Roy Orbison and Elvis and a Western Canada tour with Virgil Brown from the US. He also toured Germany and France.

The composer

In addition to his busy performance schedule, Jack also spent an average of five hours a day for much of the past 30 years creating a phenomenal, untapped source of diverse works. His compositions run the gamut of symphonic concertos, ballet and film scores, epics, modern space music, healing and new age soundscapes as well as social and sociological satires.

At the time of his passing, Jack had completed 14 pieces towards an upcoming Middle Eastern musical by playwright Joyce Kline. He also wrote the full score for *Modern Burlesque Dances*, produced last April in Vancouver.

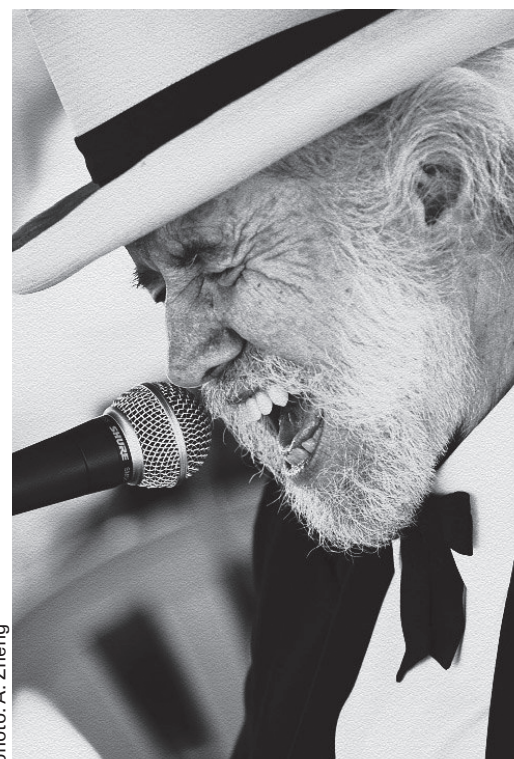


photo: A. Zheng

Tribute Gala Benefit Sunday, July 12

A special event to preserve Jack Velker's legacy and pay homage to the memory of this cherished and remarkable performer, composer and friend. The benefit features well-known bands and performers and an auction of Jack's personal memorabilia, including his favourite hats, photos and accordions. Fairview Vancouver Pub, 898 West Broadway, Vancouver. 6pm-midnight. Tickets \$20 at Cottage Bistro, 4468 Main St., 604-876-6138 (Tues-Sun from 5pm) or call 604-709-9703/604-874-4699. petsonic@telus.net

Baba Mandido Morris

A man, a drum, a legend

1935-2009

by Mahara Brenna

BABA MANDIDO MORRIS – Dido aka Dr. Drum – was born Cleopus Mopedido Morris in Louisiana on December 24, 1935. When he was six, his family packed up the old Ford, headed West and settled in Watts, South Central LA, in 1941. Dido taught himself to drum playing along with old records and graduated from sticks and pots and pans to his first hand drum at 16. His jamming on the beaches and at Griffin Park in East L.A. in the '60s developed into a ritual that continues today.

In 1969, on his way to Africa, Dido stopped off in Montreal and established the infamous Montreal Drum Circle. He ended up staying for 10 years, playing with the late greats that came through the Montreal Jazz scene: Mongo Santamaria, Freddy Hubbard and Grover Washington Jr., to name a few. Jazz, Bebop, Latin and Afro-Cuban rhythms greatly influenced Dido's style during this era. While recording with Bruce Cockburn in Toronto in 1974, Dido was introduced to Gino Vannelli's unique sound, which ultimately led to their touring together for three years through North America and Europe.

During the summer of '75 in Montreal, 16-year-old Ted Zombolas performed as a martial artist to Dido's powerful drumming in the Shango Dance Theatre. Now a doctor of Traditional Chinese Medi-



photo: Cher Bloom

cine in Philadelphia, Ted remembers the huge impact Dido had on his life: "The music Dido played during one of our shows was nothing less than spectacular.

It truly brought the performance and the performers to the height of excellence. On stage I could feel the energy from the drums surge through my body and

at times it felt as if the music was guiding my moves on stage. The audience was put into a mystical trance. As all this energy gained momentum and the story reached its feverish pitch, we on stage and the audience in attendance were left trying to catch our breath when all was done. If you could measure the amount of energy that was being emitted, I think it would have been off the scale!

"I now have a son who is a drummer. I have often spoken to him of Dido and only wished that they could have met. I tried many times to contact him and it was only through Gino Vannelli's website that I learned Dido had passed over. I still have tears knowing I'll never see him again in this lifetime. It is amazing how one person can affect so many, and how so many paths have crossed and will continue to cross because of Dido."

In 1978, Dido brought his beautiful wife Joanne and their son Kemal to Salt Spring Island where their second son Jiva was born. It was on a cold, rainy winter night in Vancouver, now 30 years ago, that I walked into the old Jericho Community Hall for a "High-Life" dance that featured "Dido and the Hand People." There was Dido, centre-stage, surrounded by an arsenal of his favourite love-drums, the colourful sweaty crowd wild and beyond caring about things like rain and traffic and work *continued p.34...*

Dido and the Hand People

by Brian Samuels

ONE OF THE most memorable groups to emerge from the Vancouver music scene in 1979 was Dido and the Hand People. Led by the charismatic and dynamic African American percussionist Dido Morris, originally from South Central LA, (via Montreal where he played with Gino Vannelli for three years), the band was a frequent attraction at the original Soft Rock Café on W. 4th Avenue in Kitsilano, and was a big draw at several High Life Society dances organized by Dhyana Bartkow, which were held at various halls and community centres throughout the city. The band also put on a number of out-

door concerts and held occasional performances on some of the Gulf Islands.

With their unique form of original Afro/Latin jazz – composed by Dido, the late keyboardist Kathy Kidd and guitarist/keyboardist Tony Bosley – the group developed a major following and their concerts always attracted a very eclectic and colourful crowd, many of whom could be seen twirling about the dance floor, adorned with beads, flowers, face paint and flowing garments and hair. The band was also noted for its flamboyant soundman, Paul Hood, who often spent more time on the dance floor than behind the console.

Dido and the Hand People provided an alternative to the standard entertainment fare of the era and a great outlet for those fringe members of society (of whom there were plenty), who preferred a much more magical and spiritual entertainment experience. The group went on to win the Battle of the Bands at Gary Taylor's nightclub in 1980, which result-

ed in a recording session at Little Mountain Recording Studio with engineer Bob Rock. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough time to properly complete the project so due to lack of funding, no album was ever released at the time. However, a tape of the recording session has been preserved and will soon be available on CD.

Don Powrie (drums), Brian Samuels (bass) and Graham Ord (sax and flute) comprised the other original band members. The group was also graced by the presence of several well-known musicians, who sat in for many of the gigs, including Kat Hendrix, Bill Runge, Mark Hasselbach, Rob Ferguson, Wayne Kozak and Pat Caird, just to name a few.

The sudden passing of Dido this past January was a shock to all of us, however, the memorial brought together a vast array of people associated with Dido's life, including many of the original dance attendees, the surviving band members, and, of course, plenty of Dido's drum circle followers. Paul Hood, Dhyana Bart-

kow and the surviving band members have decided to organize another dance event in the traditional Hand People style as a tribute to Dido and Kathy, while, at the same time, offering an "alternative dance event" option to anyone, both young and old, who may want to participate. (*See below for information.*)

Dido celebration drum circle

Sunday, July 26, 3 pm

Meet at the old anchor at Spanish Banks (Vancouver) for drumming until dark and the spreading of Dido's ashes. Bring drums and food to share. All welcome.

Tribute concert/ dance for Dido and the Hand People

Friday, September 11

Wise Hall, 1882 Adanac St. Dedicated to the memory of Dido Morris, and the late Kathy Kidd (original keyboardist). Featuring Jack Duncan on percussion (one of Dido's students) and Diane Lines on keyboards. Plans are also in the works for Dido's very talented son Kemal Evans to open the event with his band, and to have Kemal sit in with the Hand People. See www.mandido.com for ticket info and details.

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Alone in space, Waterlife

FILM

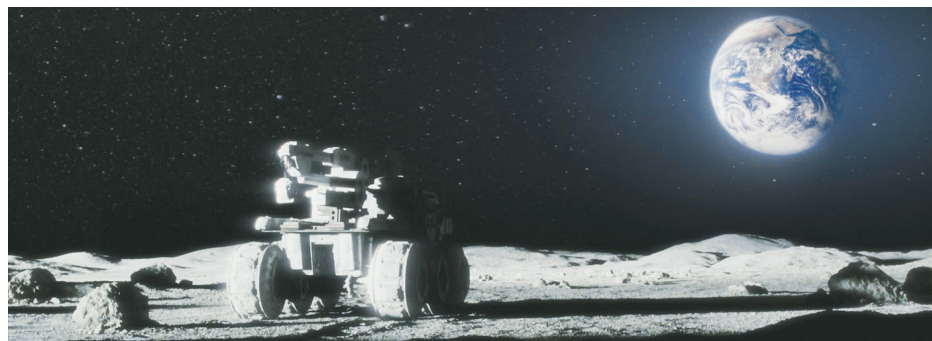
FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

SCI-FI MOVIES have become increasingly indistinguishable from standard action movies, with their big bangs, superheroes and battles with hostile aliens or murderous machines. *Moon*, out July 3, comes from that tradition where space provides a wilderness setting for the exploration of the condition of man. Instead of special-effect whizz-bangs, it offers a quietly impressive and thought provoking story that, in its look and theme, pays homage to classics like *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Solaris*.

Sam (great performance by Sam Rockwell) is coming to the end of a three-year contract mining Helium 3 – Earth's new energy source – from a base on the dark side of the Moon with only a computer called GERTY (voiced by Kevin Spacey) for company. He is desperately looking forward to returning home to see his wife and family, but with only days to go before his relief arrives, his reality starts unravelling. A mature debut feature from

spices the visuals with footage shot from the point of view of a bird, a fish and a water molecule. The soundtrack features an impressive line-up of artists, including Sam Roberts, Daniel Lanois, Phillip Glass, Brian Eno and a new song by The Tragically Hip. Gord Downie, leader of The Hip and a Lake Ontario Waterkeeper (www.waterkeeper.ca), also narrates.

The Hurt Locker, the first film from *Point Break* director Kathryn Bigelow in six years, is the latest in a line of war films set in Iraq. It catches the tensions and strains among the members of a bomb disposal unit as they search and disarm roadside explosives in Baghdad. Staff Sgt. James (Jeremy Renner) takes over as unit chief when his predecessor is blown up on the job. However, he quickly begins to lose the confidence of his team through his cavalier and reckless behaviour. Bigelow has been praised for her ability to convey the tension of a situation while scriptwriter Mark Boal draws on his own experiences of working



Moon provides a wilderness setting for the exploration of the condition of man.

Duncan Jones (son of David Bowie), this is one of those films that really benefits from you knowing as little as possible about it before you see it. What I can say is that the story teases you with possibilities and plot turns as Sam is forced to confront himself in an increasingly eerie, existentialist way.

Moving closer to home, *Waterlife*, which tells the “epic” story of the Great Lakes, is a new documentary I’m planning on seeing (opens July 7). The 109-minute film is a poetic portrait of the Lakes, from the northern end of Lake Superior to the Atlantic Ocean, and the lives of some of the 35 million people that depend on the Lakes for their survival. The film, which won the Special Jury Prize for Canadian features at the Hot Docs film festival in Toronto, profiles an Anishinabe medicine woman who walked 17,000 kilometres around the Lakes to sympathize with them. She also visits a village to investigate why most of the new babies born there are girls. Director Kevin McMahon

as an embedded journalist within an army bomb disposal squad to imbue the film with a sense of realism. The film, out on July 10, is not an overtly political piece; it offers instead a portrait of what makes these men tick under extremely stressful and dangerous conditions.

The second Brazilian Film Festival takes place this month (July 8-12) at the Vancouver International Film Centre. The mini film fest brings together six animated shorts and eight feature-length films (four documentaries and four dramas) from Brazil. The festival is actually part of a touring fest that does a circuit of London, Miami, New York, Istanbul, Vancouver, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Buenos Aires and Canudos (Bahia). It opens with Maurício Farias’ school-set, Rio de Janeiro-based drama *Veronica*. (More info at www.vifc.org)

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver documentary *You Never Bike Alone*. www.youneverbikealone.com



Getting it together

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

SPIRITUALITY

It is not the enemy we need to conquer, but rather the polarity.

WHEN A PART of the body becomes stiff due to muscle strain or arthritis, for example, there is a loss of movement and flexibility. It occurred to me that the same could be said of our attitudes and perceptions. When we believe there is an absolute right and wrong, our minds become rigid and fixed. We are not open to other viewpoints and we absorb information selectively from the environment that is in alignment with our beliefs.

The problem with all of this is that there is no such thing as absolute right or wrong. There are only points of view.

step to good guy/bad guy thinking and before we know it we have created an enemy. Of course, everything the enemy then does is wrong, or at least suspect. The fire of hostility is created and both sides continue to throw logs upon it.

As we have seen, this can continue within and between families, nations or religious groups generation after generation. The young are taught who is good or bad and the hostility is perpetuated. Interestingly, however, even within polarized groups there will be those on both sides who simply want to live in peace and who are not interested in conflict.

What can we do? The first thing we can do is recognize that we do not have to take sides. There are enough people out there adding to the energy of polar-

We can then use our intelligence to generate win-win solutions. We can do this on a small scale within our families, or on a global scale.

And it seems that when a point of view is paraded as a fact, it may then be used to justify all sorts of actions and behaviours.

When we watch televised interviews of people on two sides of a conflict, we see that each side only sees and believes its own perspective. The inability to recognize that there is no reality, only individual or group interpretations, results in, if not total blindness, then at the least, serious blind spots.

I am reminded of the scene where a pop machine or automatic teller is not working so the frustrated consumer hits or kicks the machine. We view this as a primitive non-solution.

How different is it when one gets angry at an opposing viewpoint and reacts with criticism, judgment and negation?

Whether we are looking at this issue within relationship or in our community, country or in the global village, it seems solutions never arrive through amplifying the polarities. On the contrary, it is conflict, dissonance and unrest that become amplified. Like the neck stiffened with arthritis, we cannot turn our head away from our own viewpoint enough to see what else might be displayed on another's perceptual screen.

When it comes to differences, the default program in human thinking seems to be that of focusing on what the other person or side are doing, or have done, that is wrong. From there, it is a short

ity. Instead, we need to add our energy to those who are striving for solutions, balance, broader perspectives and civility.

We can then use our intelligence to generate win-win solutions. We can do this on a small scale within our families or on a global scale. I do believe that small-scale polarities in the home or office energetically contribute to global polarity.

Increasingly, our world seems polluted with the negative energies of war, conflict and fear. We can use our own consciousness as an energy purifier. With global technology, we can influence others throughout the world, but we must first be that which we seek to see in our world.

If we want fairness, balance and understanding, we need to give them to others. In order to do that, we first need to release our hold on the idea that anyone is right and focus instead on what it is we would like to create. We need to understand both sides before we can build a bridge to connect them.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. For more articles, permission to reprint and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca

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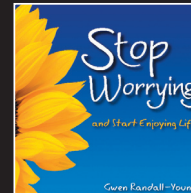
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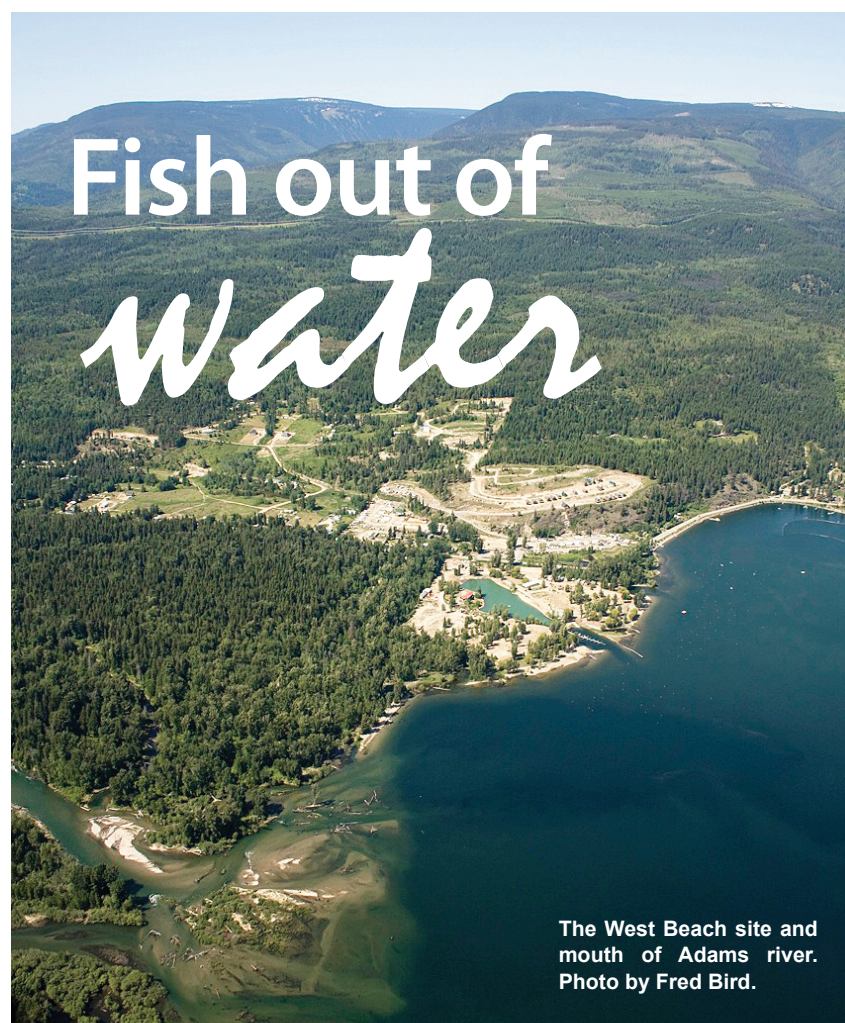
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The West Beach site and mouth of Adams river.
Photo by Fred Bird.

by Eva Lyman,
Shuswap Lake Coalition, Adams River Alliance

WHEN MY husband and I first discovered the North Shuswap in 1972, it was a quiet backwater where you could get an acre of waterfront for \$10,000. Commercial facilities consisted of a Lucky Dollar store and a gas station in Scotch Creek, with a few more neighbourhood groceries along the lake.

The drawing card then was the provincial park and campground in Scotch Creek. It is still one of the main reasons people come here, but in the last five years or so, development has taken off. In the past, young families with modest incomes could camp or rent old, waterfront cabins, but in 2000, things began to change. One of the first of the new developments was a row of 12 waterfront duplexes in Celista, selling for a quarter-million dollars each.

Clearly, this was a different clientele. Things have continued to change at an accelerated pace. In 2005, some of us discovered that, on each side of Shuswap Provincial Park, existing private rental cottages and camping areas were morphing into trendy condominiums costing more than half a million dollars a unit. Other luxurious duplexes have been built on the Scotch Creek waterfront more recently and the last time I checked, they were listed closer to the million-dollar mark.

What does this mean for the area and for the old-timers living on lower and middle incomes? The seasonal residents have become wealthier, clearly. A substantial proportion of them are early retirees, or pre-retirees, who plan to

move to their seasonal home full-time, after they retire. This trend has not been lost on developers.

This denser development means more of everything, even sewage. We discovered the developments that were permitted – four in 2005 – had all been given permission to pipe their effluent into the lake by BC's Environmental Protection Branch. We are not talking about insignificant amounts of effluent; the smallest amount permitted was 5,000 gallons per day, and one developer received permission to dump half a million gallons a day. That is about the same volume that the city of Salmon Arm generates from all its residents. This capacity could service the entire North Shuswap, with a year-round population of less than 4,000 people.

The pipeline for this effluent travels along Wharf Road and when local residents made that discovery, they showed up at the lake with placards. Within weeks, the demonstration resulted in a moratorium on the dumping of effluent into the lake by future, private developers. The victory, however, will be hollow if the half-million gallon permit is allowed to stand.

The functional problem here is that condo residents are still, to a large degree, seasonal. At one of our meetings with government officials in 2005, the head of Interior Health, Mr. Ken Christian stated that, under such circumstances, sewage treatment systems tend to fail when they go from a low volume flow in winter to full use in the spring and summer. This has

continued p.34...



The Three Muscovies

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

ORGANICS

IT ALL STARTED with a chance conversation about ducks at Seedy Saturday last spring, which was followed by my building lasagne gardens in the back garden that attracted banana slugs from the surrounding forest – slugs that could devour a row of spinach overnight! Quicker than you could say duck bill, I found myself the proud owner of two specially selected Muscovy ducklings, Amos and Abigail. Why? Because Muscovies have a voracious appetite for slugs.

After a mink massacred the A-generation, “The Three Muscovies,” better known as Benny, Betty and Blackie (or Benny and the Jets) arrived late in November. I keep telling myself this duck thing is an experiment to see whether Muscovies are a good fit with urban farming. They lay large eggs with huge yolks, which are excellent for sponge cakes, quiches and omelettes, and Benny is a 15-pound meat bird, which makes a good Christmas dinner if

to waddle down there. Although I’d read it’s a bad idea to get friendly with male Muscovies, I enjoy chatting to Benny as he plods around the garden.

Another good thing about Muscovies is they stay close to home. At dusk, I call “Benny, Betty, Blackie!” and they come up for a feed of organic layer mash. Often, they’ll spend the night on the pond safe from predators, but to keep them bonded to their duck house, I sometimes lead them there and shut them in for the night.

Benny took a fancy to Betty and she was soon nestled into a pile of spoiled hay turning 14 eggs daily for 35 days, until 11 recently hatched out. Now, we have Betty and the C-generation of 11 ducklings in the duck house and it’s all too cute for words.

So here I am in this experiment asking, “What’s next?” When the ducklings get bigger, I’ll allow Betty to take them down to the pond and hope that I get them back at night. I may lose one or two to predators during the day, but that’s why there are so many ducklings in the first place. It’s nature’s way. I have it in mind to keep a couple and to trade the rest for point of lay hens. When they are ready to leave their Mama, I’ll take them to a local poultry swap and trade them for some laying hens to get my flock up to a dozen again.

I am still learning about this breed of meaty, quack-less ducks, the most land-based of the water birds, which suits them to backyard runs with a small pond to float around in. The verdict is still out on

whether or not they make good companions for the garden as I have yet to see them eat a slug. Perhaps they don’t like my huge, slimy black and banana slugs?

Still, we might be glad to have Muscovies waddling around the garden if we really need more local food on the dinner table so I am keeping on with the experiment until I come to a final conclusion. Now, what shall I call the C-generation?

Carolyn Herriot is author of *A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide*. She grows *Seeds of Victoria* at the Garden Path Centre where she teaches *The Zero Mile Diet – Twelve Steps to Sustainable Home-grown Food Production* and *Growing an Edible Plant Business*. www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath



Benny and the Jets on patrol.

you are not vegetarian or vegan.

Last year, after a sudden rampage by raccoons and mink, we lost half our flock of hens and our first two ducks. By July, I’d had enough so the five remaining hens came out to free-range until the chicken coop could be moved to fenced quarters in the back garden. Interestingly, no birds were killed while free-ranging during the day; they always return to the coop at dusk where they are safely shut in until morning.

When Benny and the Jets first arrived, I bonded them to their duck house (a converted doghouse) before allowing them to free-range. The girls, Betty and Blackie, arrived with clipped wings and couldn’t fly, but Benny’s wings grew back fast and he quickly discovered the creek and pond and returned to show the Jets how

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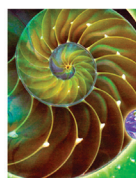
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21st century wonders

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

THE NEW CENTURY is only nine years old and already our prospects for the future have become a full-blown montage of hopelessness and despair. It is true that if we continue with business-as-usual we face a worse-than-dire future. I follow the climate science, so I know. But enough already! The human spirit is perennially strong and our global immune system is fighting back by creating new thought forms to fight the virus of negativity.

In previous centuries, we replaced ignorance with widespread literacy. We opened new horizons through science, technology and exploration. We ended slavery, created democracy and overthrew fascism. We organized labour, liberated women and won civil rights for all. What might we achieve in this century? Here are seven possibilities totally within our reach if we have the vision and courage of our ancestors.

First Wonder: A shift to 100% renewable energy: Energy efficiency, solar PV, solar thermal in the world's deserts, wind, geothermal, tidal, wave, hydropower and bio-energy offer us far more energy than we need, and once we

that future generations will have to visit a museum to learn what poverty was is still very much alive.

Fourth Wonder: The end of war: This is not a fantasy. By removing oil from the equation of global conflict, we remove the major cause of war. The second major cause — nationalism — is already dying, as more and more people find a solid identity as citizens of our shared planet, rather than of their nation alone. Global peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict resolution are expanding their reach every year. After millennia of bloodshed, we can finally eliminate war.

Fifth Wonder: The end of cruelty to animals: This may be the hardest wonder to achieve, yet all that's needed is widespread understanding of the atrocious ways we treat animals in factory farms, puppy mills, veal crates, bear bile cages, and so on. We already know from our love of pets that the bond with animals can be enormously strong. With persistence, we can end the suffering we cause.

Sixth Wonder: World government: Can any advanced planet operate without world government? It is only the dying embers of national pride that prevent us

If our younger people have their way, this century will see a sweeping, green revolution to liberate nature.

have made the shift, this energy will be available *forever*. No more wars over oil. No more air pollution. And much less climate chaos.

Second Wonder: A global economy that respects nature: In Canada's last federal election, if every voter had been younger than 25, the Green Party would now be running the country. There is a growing recognition that we can no longer treat Earth's myriad ecosystems as "negative externalities," following the blind stupidity of mainstream economics. If our younger people have their way, this century will see a sweeping, green revolution that uses legislation, green taxation and global treaties to liberate nature from oppression.

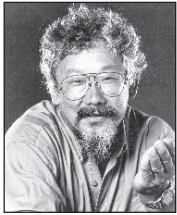
Third Wonder: The end of poverty: Muhammad Yunus, who created the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, has shown how microlending can lift the world's poorest out of poverty, while Peru's Hernando de Soto has demonstrated how granting legal title can enable them to turn their assets into liquid capital and participate with their enterprise. This will take a prolonged effort, but the dream

from embracing workable global treaties and a democratically elected global assembly. Future generations will wonder what the fuss was all about.

Seventh Wonder: One spirituality: When the world's religions were created, it was out of a realization that one supreme God would end the bloodshed between followers of rival tribal gods. Today, the same thing is happening as more and more people realize that they can draw on the deep spirituality of any religion without embracing its fundamentalist trappings. Science itself is on the verge of a breakthrough to a unified field theory that will merge matter and consciousness.

The only things that hold us distant from these wonders are negativity and hopelessness, the sad pillars of tired minds. We, ourselves, could be the Eighth Wonder of the 21st century if we cooperate with others to realize the dream.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org), which welcomes your membership, and the publisher of EcoNews (www.earthfuture.com)



GM – you’ve got a share

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

ENVIRONMENT

IF YOU’RE A Canadian taxpayer, you’re now the proud part owner of a failing automobile company, thanks to the federal and Ontario governments. They’re generously giving General Motors \$10.5 billion of your money for an 11.7 percent share in the company.

Former CIBC World Markets chief economist Jeff Rubin calls it an “investment in obsolescence.” The author of *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller: Oil and the End of Globalization* recently told *Tyee* news (theyee.ca), “We should be investing in

GM executives have also argued in the past that the markets should dictate their actions and governments should stay out of the way, but they now seem to have made a U-turn when it comes to government involvement.

Well, we now own part of GM. Shouldn’t we have some say in what becomes of it? Will the US and Canadian governments show some imagination and foresight and turn this crisis into an opportunity?

Mr. Rubin and Mr. Moore are right. Our future is in fuel-efficient cars, buses, trains and in green energy. And even private automobiles may eventually be a thing of the past; the idea of using a

We don’t need more Cadillacs and Hummers. We need a new way of looking at our world.

the future, not the past, making a huge capital investment to build buses and public transit.”

He’s not alone in his thinking. South of the border, where the US government is giving GM a whopping \$50 billion for a 60 percent share of the company, filmmaker Michael Moore wrote, “The only way to save GM is to kill GM.” (see full article, pg. 22)

He goes on to say that doesn’t mean killing the infrastructure. “If we allow the shutting down and tearing down of our auto plants, we will sorely wish we still had them when we realize that those factories could have built the alternative energy systems we now desperately need,” he writes. “And when we realize that the best way to transport ourselves is on light rail and bullet trains and cleaner buses, how will we do this if we’ve allowed our industrial capacity and its skilled workforce to disappear?”

How indeed? One thing is certain: We don’t want GM to go back to “business as usual.” This is a company that has fought every progressive move to improve safety and reduce the environmental impact of vehicles, from seat belts and air bags to fuel-efficiency standards. The usual argument has been that any progressive move would drive the price of cars up to the point where the company would go out of business. Well, guess what? Maybe if GM had spent more money on keeping up with the times than on lobbying and court challenges and building SUVs and Hummers, it wouldn’t be facing bankruptcy today.

tonne of metal and many litres of fossil fuel to get one person to the grocery store or work is more than a bit absurd.

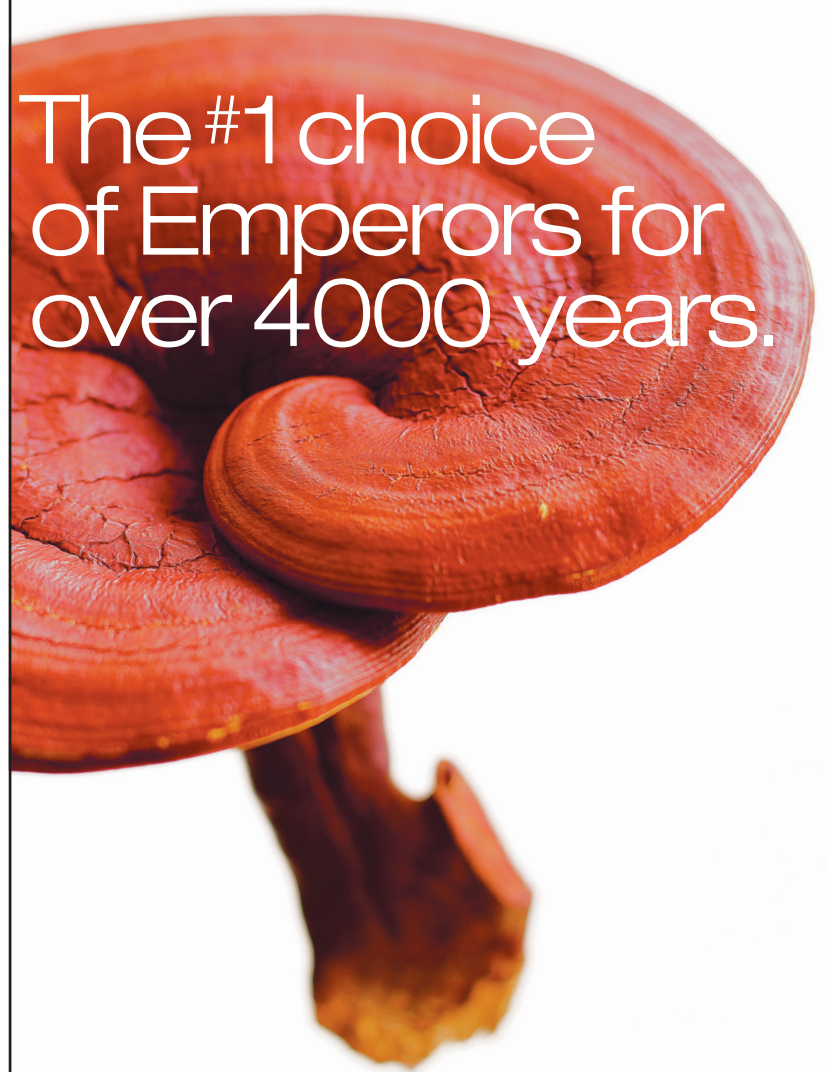
We often hear arguments that a major shift in our manufacturing base is not possible; it will be too costly and take too much time. But, as Michael Moore points out, in 1942, GM quickly switched from building cars to producing planes, tanks and weapons for the war effort. The emergency we face today is no less severe; in fact, it is more so. And we have better technology now. Likewise, when the Soviet Union launched its first Sputnik satellite in 1957, the US spared no amount of money or effort to get people into space and eventually onto the moon.

And despite arguments that we can’t afford green technologies, governments didn’t have much trouble finding billions – or trillions – of dollars to bail out banks and car companies that were largely the authors of their own problems. Where are our priorities?

The need for a cleaner future is here. The technology is here. The opportunity is here. All that’s required is some will and imagination from governments and corporations. We can no longer rely on diminishing fossil fuel supplies. Our very survival depends on developing more sustainable technologies, transportation and products that don’t pollute the air, water, and soil. We don’t need more Cadillacs and Hummers. We need a new way of looking at our world.

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Good-Bye GM

by Michael Moore

ECONOMICS

of the United States will have made it official: General Motors, as we know it, has been totaled.

As I sit here in GM's birthplace, Flint, Michigan, I am surrounded by friends and family who are filled with anxiety about what will happen to them and to the town. Forty percent of the homes and businesses in the city have been abandoned. Imagine what it would be like if you lived in a city where almost every other house is empty. What would be your state of mind?

It is with sad irony that the company which invented "planned obsolescence" – the decision to build cars that would fall apart after a few years so that the customer would then have to buy a new one – has now made itself obsolete. It refused to build automobiles that the public wanted – cars that got great gas mileage, were as safe as they could be and were exceedingly comfortable to drive. Oh, and that wouldn't start falling apart after two years. GM stubbornly fought environmental and safety regulations. Its executives arrogantly ignored the "inferior" Japanese and German cars – cars which would become the gold standard for automobile buyers. And it was hell-bent on punishing its unionized workforce, lopping off thousands of workers for no good reason other than to "improve" the short-term bottom line of the corporation.

Beginning in the 1980s, when GM was posting

record profits, it moved countless jobs to Mexico and elsewhere, thus destroying the lives of tens of thousands of hard-working Americans. The glaring stupidity of this policy was that, when they eliminated the income of so many middle class families, who did they think was going to be able to afford to buy their cars? History will record this blunder in the same way it now writes about the French building the Maginot Line or how the Romans cluelessly poisoned their own water system with lethal lead in its pipes.

So here we are at the deathbed of General Motors. The company's body not yet cold, and I find myself filled with – dare I say it – joy. It is not the joy of revenge against a corporation that ruined my hometown

speed trains for nearly five decades – and we don't even have one!

4. Initiate a program to put light rail mass transit lines in all our large and medium-sized cities. Build those trains in the GM factories. And hire local people everywhere to install and run this system.

5. For people in rural areas not served by the train lines, have the GM plants produce energy efficient clean buses.

6. For the time being, have some factories build hybrid or all-electric cars (and batteries). It will take a few years for people to get used to the new ways to transport ourselves, so if we're going to have automobiles, let's have kinder, gentler ones.

It refused to build automobiles that the public wanted – cars that got great gas mileage, were as safe as they could be and were exceedingly comfortable to drive.

Oh, and that wouldn't start falling apart after two years.

and brought misery, divorce, alcoholism, homelessness, physical and mental debilitation and drug addiction to the people I grew up with. Nor do I, obviously, claim any joy in knowing that 21,000 more GM workers will be told that they too are without a job.

But you and I and the rest of America now own a car company! I know, I know, who on earth wants to run a car company? Who among us wants \$50 billion of our tax dollars thrown down the rat hole of still trying to save GM? Let's be clear about this: The only way to save GM is to kill GM. Saving our precious industrial infrastructure, though, is another matter and must be a top priority.

Thus, as GM is "reorganized" by the federal government and the bankruptcy court, here is the plan I am asking President Obama to implement for the good of the workers, the GM communities and the nation as a whole:

1. Just as President Roosevelt did after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the President must tell the nation that we are at war and we must immediately convert our auto factories to factories that build mass transit vehicles and alternative energy devices.

2. Don't put another \$30 billion into the coffers of GM to build cars. Instead, use that money to keep the current workforce – and most of those who have been laid off – employed so that they can build the new modes of 21st century transportation. Let them start the conversion work now.

3. Announce that we will have bullet trains criss-crossing this country in the next five years. Japan is celebrating the 45th anniversary of its first bullet train this year. Now they have dozens of them. Average speed: 165 mph. Average time a train is late: under 30 seconds. They have had these high-

7. Transform some of the empty GM factories to facilities that build windmills, solar panels and other means of alternate forms of energy. We need tens of millions of solar panels right now. And there is an eager and skilled workforce who can build them.

8. Provide tax incentives for those who travel by hybrid car or bus or train. Also, credits for those who convert their home to alternative energy.

9. To help pay for this, impose a two-dollar tax on every gallon of gasoline. This will get people to switch to more energy saving cars or to use the new rail lines and rail cars the former autoworkers have built for them.

Well, that's a start. Please, please, please don't save GM so that a smaller version of it will simply do nothing more than build Chevys or Cadillacs. This is not a long-term solution. Don't throw bad money into a company whose tailpipe is malfunctioning, causing a strange odor to fill the car.

One hundred years ago this year, the founders of General Motors convinced the world to give up their horses and saddles and buggy whips to try a new form of transportation. Now it is time for us to say goodbye to the internal combustion engine. It seemed to serve us well for so long. We enjoyed the carhops at the A&W. We made out in the front – and the back – seat. We watched movies on large outdoor screens, went to the races at NASCAR tracks across the country, and saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time through the window down Hwy. 1. And now it's over.

It's a new day and a new century. The President – and the UAW – must seize this moment and create a big batch of lemonade from this very sour and sad lemon. Sixty percent of GM is ours. I think we can do a better job.

Yours,
Michael Moore
MMFlint@aol.com, MichaelMoore.com

*Excerpted from http://axisoflogic.com/artman/publish/Article_55915.shtml. In 2002, Common Ground sponsored Michael Moore's award-winning film *Bowling for Columbine* at the Vancouver International Film Festival. Also, in December 2003, CG featured Michael Moore on the cover.*



The real reason for GM's demise

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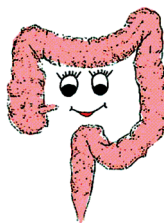
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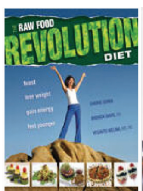
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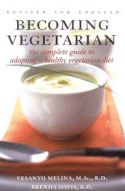
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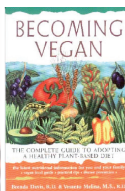
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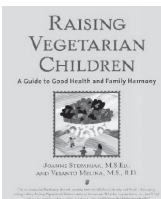


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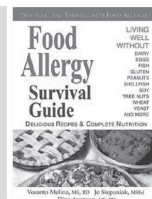


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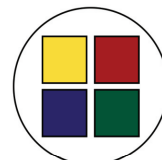


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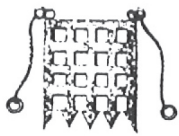
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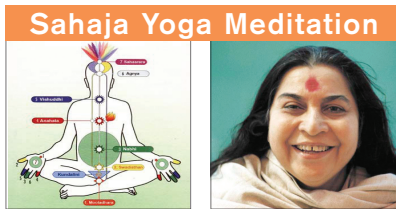
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Letters

Let's visit electoral reform again soon

Peter Bromley's *First Past the Post Mortem* [Common Ground, June 2009] was very insightful and I was relieved in reading it to know that some actual perspective and analysis was being brought

almost nothing about it on CBC radio, my one regular media source.

I often feel that in many matters of designing and managing our society, we usually compare ourselves only to the US. We accept contests when we have the possibility of more creative processes.

Culture, education, sustainable management, new green industries – all these possibilities require a greater multiplicity of ideas and a different attitude than that which we presently have in place.

to bear on our most recent attempt at electoral reform.

I appreciated getting the history of how the question has been handled in BC and how the two sides were set up to compete against each other rather than to inform the public. I agree we needed much more informative discussion and debate. As voting day approached, I became more and more agitated at the apparent lack of interest the referendum was generating. Hardly anyone seemed to know it was happening and I heard

Why do kids who sing and dance have to line up in winner-take-all competitions? Don't they all deserve to be supported?

Culture, education, sustainable management, new green industries – all these possibilities require a greater multiplicity of ideas and a different attitude than that which we presently have in place. I believe it will take some form of proportional representation to start moving in a more creative direction and to stop fearing the responsibility we could take for the future. How exciting to envision

BC's future with many voices being heard and having a say in a collaborative forum, a legislature in which representatives are elected to work together.

I'm sure that I am among many who want the question of electoral reform raised again and soon.

– Colleen Savage, Vancouver

Don't blame low voter turnout on apathy

I was a volunteer with the BC-STV campaign and read Peter Bromley's *First Past the Post Mortem* article with interest.

The only jarring point for me was at the very beginning, in the second sentence: "Less than half of BC's eligible voters showed up at the polls, meaning that less than a third of BC's electorate rejected a proposal that might have made such displays of apathy and imbalance a thing of the past."

Please don't sum up all non-voting as "apathy."

People who research the issue note that the majority of non-voters are far from apathetic; this, importantly, includes young people. Non-voters are as, if not more, concerned about the direction of this country as voters are,

and many non-voters are engaged politically in other ways, including being volunteers in their communities.

Mainstream media love to perpetuate the myth of the apathetic voter, and the voting public happily and often arrogantly goes along with it. But voter apathy is a myth, which misrepresents and is disrespectful of what, for most non-voters, has been a painful decision. In their (our) view, participation in a system that is not representative of the values of a sizeable majority of the electorate is an endorsement of that system.

Voters are free to disagree with us, but anyone who cares about Canada's increasingly low voter turnouts, must start listening to what non-voters are saying about why they aren't voting, rather than simply labelling us all as apathetic and our opinions of no consequence precisely because we don't vote.

Lectures using such techniques to non-voters appear in newspaper editorials, including my two local papers, every election season. If low voter turnout is indeed a concern, the logic of such tactics baffles me. It also serves to preserve the status quo.

– Chrystal Ocean, Cowichan Valley

Welcome to Village Vancouver

**Talk to your neighbour.
See what happens...**

by Kathie Wallace and Ross Moster



Potluck at Glen Valley Farm.

OUR DEEPEST dream is to engage the creative capacity of individuals to build vibrant, engaged neighbourhoods that help transform our region into one that offers sustainable and equitable living spaces for all. The question we ask at Village Vancouver is how we can catalyze and encourage people to step up, speak out and interact in community.

Our intent is to provide an exciting and inviting article featuring the stories of all of us extra/ordinary people to inspire connection with each other so we can “Give Peace a Chance.”

Whether it's sharing resources, helping neighbours in need, engaging in activities around food or getting together in any one



of hundreds of other ways, we look forward to hearing your stories of what's growing in your neighbourhood. Join in the fun. Email Ross Moster at rmoster@flash.net

Front porch food co-ops

NOWBC Co-op (Neighbours Organic Weekly) is an online market where local organic farmers and food processors can sell their produce year round. People can place their weekly order online and pick it up at one of 21 “neighbourhood depots” (a NOWBC member's home) across Greater Vancouver. NOWBC was formed by a group of people who want to work together to eat locally grown, organic food bought from small-scale farms championing sustainable practices to ensure food security here in BC. Join the movement. See www.nowbc.ca

Let's grow neighbourhoods

Help us develop, support and promote a diverse range of “village” initiatives. We are looking for neighbourhood-oriented stories and photos from you that inspire neighbours to come together in ways that promote community and sustainability. To get involved or have a conversation with us, see www.villagevancouver.ca. Our website offers events, upcoming workshops like Backyard Chickens 101, interactive blogs and other ongoing village activities.

Backyard chickens 101

Learn about the proper care of small, urban flocks of hens through neighbourhood based, interactive, backyard chicken workshops this summer with Heather Havens, an agricultural and animal scientist. Leave the workshop with your very own neighbourhood chicken support group. See www.chickensin-vancouver.com

Transition towns

We must expand our understanding to see the big connection and the interrelationship of everything. “Transition Towns” is a constructive, hands-on response to climate change and Peak Oil. Centred around working together in community, the grassroots Transition Towns movement (www.transition-towns.org) has quickly spread around the world with over 1,000 initiatives. Join with Village Vancouver

and others in building upon local initiatives designed to help individuals, neighbourhoods and communities “transition” to living well while using substantially less energy and reducing carbon emissions and increasing local resilience.

In my village

On my street in Dunbar, I learned what a village is. Bill started it because he welcomes people. He sits on his front porch and says “Hello” to passersby, sharing polite information with neighbours about neighbours and introducing us until we all know each other. Now we share ladders, food, toys, gardening tips and drainage advice; you name it and we share it. Bill also lives along a stretch of six houses that are fence-free. It is just one, long, connected yard. In the middle, grandparents Joe and Jenny keep toys out front and welcome children and their parents to stop and play. Every kid knows Joe and Jenny's house.

My four-year-old is petrified of organized programs full of children, but he loves playing and learning together with the throng of kids on our block. Maryanne organizes the block party where Bill sets up tables in his front yard and makes a big pot of chili for the occasion. Maryanne also organizes the annual lane party; I mean, garage sale. Jerry coordinates the Block Watch group and we have a NOWBC food club. Now, I bring muffins over to new neighbours and say “Hello.”

— Contributed by Joanna Michal in Dunbar.

...Independent Media from pg. 12

(or perhaps re-enables) and encourages a greater re-mixing of a friendly media system and culture. Rather than conceiving of and distributing media items as commodities, Creative Commons (CC) encourages the production, circulation and reception of media as a continuous and shared process.

Enabling sharing

While the open sharing elements of Creative Commons' licensing system are voluntary, according to a 2007 survey of CC users, over 80 percent of the

CC-licensed works permit derivatives — meaning they allow others to build upon their media. While many medial producers and users do not yet use Creative Commons, it is becoming more popular. As of 2007, there were an estimated 60 million Creative Commons-licensed cultural artifacts on the Internet, and CC use is still increasing.

In an unprecedented move in 2007, Yahoo! announced plans to allow users to employ Creative Commons licensing in its huge menu of online spaces and tools. It doesn't appear that the

announcement has come to full fruition, but, at the very least, it means that its popular photo sharing service Flickr has remained Creative Commons friendly.

Creative Commons licensing is not limited to media production. There is also the ever-expanding open-software movement, and in the US, the Creative Commons group also recently launched a new project called Legal Commons that will “collect and make available machine-readable copies of government documents and law.”

Where it goes from here is anyone's guess. Let's just share the idea and see where it leads us.

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media. He contributed to *Censored 2008* and *Battleground: The Media*, and has written for *The Tyee*, *Toronto Star*, *Epoch Times* and *Adbusters*. Reach him at: steve@democraticmedia.ca www.FacebookSteve.com www.SteveOnTwitter.com

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www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm

JUL 7 & AUG 4

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and the 'star' and the extraordinary implications for our
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JUL 9

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JUL 10

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Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction
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www.pacificreflexology.com

JUL 10-12

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Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle: Sat.
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www.shamanichealing.info

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www.thefestival.bc.ca, call 604-602-9798 or
check online for local Vancouver outlets.

JUL 12

Jack Velker Tribute Gala Benefit features well-
known performers and an auction of Jack's personal
memorabilia. Fairview Vancouver Pub, 898 West
Broadway, Vancouver. 6pm-midnight. Tickets \$20 at
Cottage Bistro, 4468 Main St., 604-876-6138 (Tues-Sun
from 5pm) or call 604-709-9703/604-874-4699.
Email petsonic@telus.net

JUL 22

Align yourself with the positive energies of the
universe through meditation. 6:30pm
@ YWCA, Room 411, 535 Hornby St, Vancouver.
Always Free. 604-317-2747.

JUL 26

Dido Summer Celebration Drum Circle: Sunday,
3PM @ the old ANCHOR, Spanish Banks. We'll drum til
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See you there!!!

JUL 30-AUG 3

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SEPT 11

Tribute concert/dance for Dido and the
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Featuring Jack Duncan on percussion (one of Dido's
original students) and Diane Lines on keyboards. Plans
are also in the works for Dido's son Kemal Evans to
open the event with his own band and sit in with the
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SEPT 11-13

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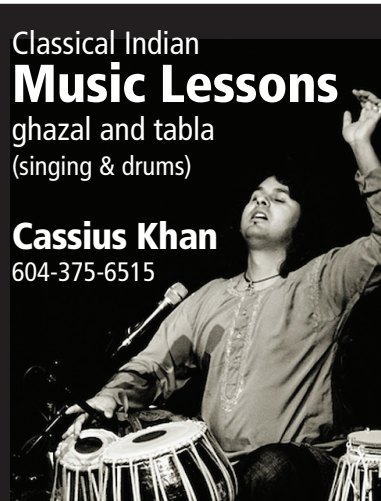


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...Dido - from p.15

the next day. Once again, the audience was in a trance, ecstatic to be alive and dancing to Dido's drums.

As I looked up at him, I saw before me my two childhood loves, Sidney Poitier and Yul Brynner, rolled into one exotic, soulful being. Several years later, Dido's and my life rolled into "One," and our souls have journeyed together ever since.

In the late '80s, Dido finally completed the voyage to Africa he had first embarked on from L.A. in the late '60s. He trained at the Academy of African Music in Ghana, studying traditional drumming, singing and dance with master drummer/musician Mustapha Tetty Addy. Dido also traced back his own heritage and roots. This body of work became the foundation for his next 20 years of teaching.

Over the years, Dido formed numerous bands as well as performing with "African Heritage" in the Australian Expo and the "Royal Drummers" in more recent years. A lifetime as a master drummer/musician, band leader, teacher and facilitator had now come full circle. Dido now offered his very unique blending of drum mastery, knowledge of human nature and facilitation skills in his "Have Drums Will Travel" to schools throughout BC and "Drumming in the Workplace Playshops" for up to 200 participants.

Our beloved Mandido passed in his

sleep on January 9, 2009. His service and wake took place on January 24 and over 700 people attended. The extraordinary gathering of friends and musicians erupted into a massive celebration for this legend of a man, in what *The Georgia Straight* called "the Mother of all drum circles." Among those who spoke at the service were Sal Ferreras, Albert St. Albert, Blu Mankuma and Carlos Casta.

On April 2, Dido was awarded the BC Arts Starts Championship Award for "his excellent contribution to the arts and education throughout British Columbia." In honour of his father, Kemal received the award to a huge wave of appreciation and gratitude. Kemal said, "If there's one word to sum up my father it would be 'acceptance.' Dido gave kindness and acceptance to everyone he met."

In a poem sent to us following the awards, Les Wheatly said, "Dido has touched hundreds of thousands of lives and we are all the richer for it." Baba Mandido Morris, the Grandfather of African drumming in Vancouver, was a teacher and an inspiration to many of the finest percussionists in the region. Dido's dignity, gentleness and powerful presence live on in all of our drumming and in our hearts and our hands, but perhaps most importantly, he is woven into our souls.

www.mandido.com

...Fish out of water - from p.18

apparently happened in at least one of the developments; a three-month start-up grace period has been permitted and this, of course, takes us through most of the summer. By sheer coincidence, an older, adjacent subdivision that takes its water from the lake by a deep intake nearby has been on a boil water advisory ever since the condominiums were built.

We are also finding out more about some of the deleterious components of even well-treated sewage. Whoever heard of phthalates a few years ago? We did not know about the persistence of pharmaceuticals, hormones and chemicals common in household use. Now we know they have "gender bender" effects, create trans-gendered as well as hermaphrodite fish and amphibians, and so on. The media run programs on the disappearing male. It's all in the water.

Recently, another development issue has arisen: a new proposal on the site of an old private campground next to the Adams River delta and Roderick Haig-Brown Provincial Park to build 160 RV sites, 72 motel lodges, 46 detached motel units, three residences and four lakefront cabins, as well as an 80-seat restaurant, shops and, of course, boat moorage.

Residents were hopeful when local MLA George Abbott, the Premier and the Minister of Environment all stated that the Province would buy out the development site and add it to the adjacent park. That was in April of this year.

In May, the developer began marketing his development to buyers.

The Adams River is the most significant sockeye spawning river in BC, if not the entire West Coast. Other salmon spawn here and along miles of the lake-shore as well. While some activists worry about fish farms, and quite rightfully so, are we not missing the fundamentals here? If the fish don't spawn, or if they and the hatchlings get cut up by boat propellers, will there be any returning salmon left to be attacked by sea lice?

Lawyers in the community are currently studying details pertaining to this proposal. Local citizens hope that the Province's plan to buy the land goes ahead, but if it does not, they are at a point when they plan to continue fighting for the salmon. This is a critical issue. Back in 1972, there was no Eurasian milfoil growing in Shuswap Lake and there was no slime on the pebbles. Today, machines are used to clear the beaches of the weeds, cutting up any unfortunate fish that happen to be swimming among them.

If sewer pipes pour 25,000 gallons of wastes into the lake on each side of this same campground daily, how clean can the water remain? How can we justify our cavalier neglect to future generations, as well as to the elders who have drank untreated lake water all their lives? This is beyond stupidity; it is criminal neglect.



On Track Zodiac

JULY 2009 Adrien Dilon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Your invisible acts of kindness and random gestures of authentic behaviour may not have made you famous. However, that which gives you the energy to continue such acts of power is also what keeps you so keenly self developed and interested in others' well being.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

You can take on more than your usual workload and get much accomplished. Your livelihood will increase as the planets align and swiftly transmute to bring about fruition. Balance the hard work you do with play and you won't miss out on the dance of life – that which is love.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

The clarity that comes from a life lesson will now allow you to turn hocus-pocus into focus. Deceit and disappointment are not fun when you encounter them, but you can now clearly see how to proceed. Your future seems much brighter to you when you have such awakenings.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Did the chair break from under you as the framework collapsed? Does the rickety, old porch step give way when you step off it? Make sure your footing is the bedrock of stability. Try to remember the tools you need to keep your eye on the sparrow and your feet on the ground.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You may want to stay clear of sharp objects and be especially careful this month. Cuts, scrapes or even a hint of airborne particulates could find passage. You may also experience so much fast-paced activity that you utilize it to complete projects easily.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

If you feel like a seventh wheel at times, try to hang in. Three is a crowd, but three can transmute the balance of and between two parts. Choices are easier when more are given. Two is dualistic, but you are in resolution now, not conflict.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

If you find people working at cross-purposes with your efforts, you may have to sit out a particular project. If you are in a position to hire and fire, catch-and-release or even change horses mid-stream. Finding the correct balance is crucial to staying centred.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Perhaps you feel that some friends have been grasping at your opportunities. You have become fed up with the rapaciousness of others and choose to distance yourself. You may decide to keep your cards close to your chest. Keep your vision alive within your sanctum.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You breathe a big sigh of relief as you pick yourself up and dust yourself off from another close call. Your intuition saved you from taking a different path, though not an obvious one. Your choice leads to a necessary progression. Relax and kick back; the world is your playground.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Staying healthy is usually your strong suit and any workout regimen requires your diligence. Diets and lifestyle routines deserve your attention as you focus on endurance. For the greater part of the summer, desert the desserts and maintain follow-through.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

When someone shows you a mirror, it can be a startling discovery and often brings crucial awareness. It is a lucky thing to meet someone who reflects back to you that which you are. Perhaps it is time to reveal your heart more freely. Life awaits and love moves in like a soft wave.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

Anyone who tries to make demands of you will end up seeing dust in your wake as you disappear. Those who impinge upon your freedom will get a taste of just how deep the Piscean waters are. Those who cross the line offer you a test as you discover your own worthiness.

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 34 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dilon@gmail.com.

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Naseem Gulamhusein, Yoga Teacher Training Program Coordinator



it shows



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